Professor Coker began his talk by reminding the audience that he was a political scientist and not a moral philosopher. Therefore, his comments, Reflections on the Long War, would come from his political science background. Primarily, he intended to discuss two topics related to the concept of the Long War:

- Why Europeans have trouble buying into the concept.
- General discussions on the validity of the term Long War

First question: Is the war on terror a war or not?

- Brits would likely say that it was not
- Coker disagrees but believes one must be careful about how the term is used.
  - For one thing we might not be able to fight it in the right place
  - The scale of the war is greater than the public understands
    - None of the failed terror attack attempts are in the data base
    - We are victims of our own secrecy about this
  - No statistical database shows how successful you are being – no metrics
    - Only guesses exist about the numbers in Al Qaeda leadership
    - Most related numbers are based on dubious information

- Academics have not helped
  - 20,000 articles written post-9/11
  - 7 contained statistical analytic data
  - Result: Makes it difficult to hold the high moral ground
    - Hard to understand what Europeans believe
    - Only history can identify things like the starting date of the 30 Years War
    - Europe is seeped in all this history so such terms can alienate them

The term Global Insurgency might have worked better for Europeans

- Closer to what they see
- Al Qaeda is something different again
  - Shares common tactics of terror
o Does want to overthrow established western governments
o Lives only in minds and imaginations
o No single organization
  ▪ One section does not need to talk to another
  ▪ Anyone can be part of it just by saying so and acting on own
  ▪ A networked insurgency
o Constantly morphing into something else rather like a computer virus
  ▪ Some will stay hidden even from creators of the system
o No life for the organization other than its own continuing existence

It is amazing at the start of the 21st Century that the US is not facing an enemy country
  ▪ However, US is facing two stateless threats
    o Anti-globalists
    o Al Qaeda
  ▪ The internet is what the factory was to in the 19th Century
    o Both bring people together to share ideas
    o Both provide means to fight the establishment
  ▪ Without the internet we would not have
    o Mass demonstrations
    o Consciousness raising of anti-globalists
  ▪ With internet, war is likely to continue for a long time

  ▪ Al Qaeda is a self-sustaining movement
    o Will take many forms over our lifetime
    o Brought together only with the concept of jihad
  ▪ It is a war, as much as Europeans would disagree
    o But the term “Long” is more questionable

Most American believe that they are in a conflict now
Most Europeans believe that they are trying to avoid a conflict

In a speech President Bush noted that there have been no more 9/11’s on US soil because we have been fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan
  ▪ Europeans see that they themselves are on the frontline of the coming battle
    o All major attacks have been planned in Europe
    o Europe is small enough that people can travel easily to speak to each other
    o Europe has not been able to prosecute one attacker so far
  ▪ There are now ethical debates about policing, not about how to fight a war
  ▪ This could be something that will divide the US and Europe

The US debate about immigration is different from that in Europe
  ▪ Europe worries about immigrants who will not buy into the basic society
  ▪ Ethnic strangers become ethical strangers

There are many big differences of opinion between the US and the Europeans
  ▪ Example: The Kyoto Agreements which some US states now buy into
Biggest difference relates to the war in Iraq
In the past there were big arguments between US and Europe about NATO out of area deployments and Soviet intentions
  o Europeans were concerned more with Soviet intentions
  o US was more concerned with Soviet capabilities
  o Now can’t even agree on who the enemy is

Long War is really about risk management
Bush was first to say that this situation is no new world order
  o Only trying to reduce the further development of insecurity
In the 19th Century it was determined that crime was a moral deviation
  o So built prisons designed to be reform schools to improve prisoners
In the 1980s and 1990s saw that this was not working so changes happened
  o Moved toward harsher penalties (3 strikes and out / electronic tagging)
US has highest number of incarcerated people with UK a distant second

Three requirements to fight the Long War
1. Surveillance
   a. At home and at work as well as outside
   b. Residents of London can expect to be on about 300 cameras during an average day
   c. Can also be followed by tracking credit card use
   d. This is a product of the risk management efforts
   e. Can expect ever more intrusive verification at all levels
      i. Not just from satellite sensors
      ii. Need to send verifiers into Iran to back up satellite data
2. Precautionary principle
   a. You must not wait for all the data to be in to take action
      i. If you do, you’ll be too late and consequences can be catastrophic
      ii. Examples: global warming or nuclear weapons in countries like Iran
3. Understanding the unknown unknowns
   a. From the fog of ignorance
   b. Besides Rumsfeld’s three categories of unknown unknowns, should also consider those things we forgot that we know
   c. We don’t know much now about the world threat situation
      i. We had the military balance in the Cold War figured out
      ii. Today, no way to know how many suicide bombers there may be
   d. Use to be able to even measure Soviet intentions with academic discussions and military exercises
      i. Today, can’t do any of this
      ii. No summits, no policy process

Where does this leave us?
- Good possibility of an attack on Iran in the next couple of years
- Why? Because we can’t know all that we need to know

The Risk Trap
- Kyoto is not the answer to global warming but what is?
- All agree that Iran should not have nuclear weapons but how do we avoid it?
  - It is a judgment call whether we should attack Iran versus wait it out
    - Europe fears less about Iran but is at more risk
- Look at the behavior of smokers – They know risks but continue anyway
  - Yet smokers might not go hang gliding because of the perceived risk
- The real problem: no one knows what victory in the Long War will look like
- Rumsfeld said that victory is an outmoded concept
- Measure of when to leave will only be “when the mission is completed”
- Totally against Clausewitzian concept that warriors should know what victory is
- The military may now be driving the war, but not in a nefarious way

Are we winning? Consider these gauges and metrics:
- Are we “draining the swamp?”
- Are we “winning hearts and minds?”
- Is the number of defectors rising?
- Is it difficult for the other side to recruit suicide bombers?
- Is funding to the terrorists being cut?
- Is state support being cut? (Libya was a major sign of success.)
- Body count – discredited as a metric

The problem: None of these metrics (except body count) are wrong measures of success
- But there are no templates to incorporate information about them
- If you can’t figure out what victory means, then you can’t identify the metrics

Professor Coker noted that he was more supportive of the American position than most Europeans
- Expect that there will be more problems between US and Europe on this
- Everything is up for more analysis
- No two experts agree

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

As a presidential candidate John Kerry spoke of treating terror as only a nuisance, but it is more than a nuisance
- Europe has a different risk threshold
- US politicians tend to scare people unnecessarily
- European politicians tend to placate people unnecessarily

US also has two other major threats
- China where the US is again using the either you are with us or against us mode
- Latin America which has not yet been noticed as a problem
  - The Monroe Doctrine has disintegrated
Terrorism is more than a nuisance but it is only one strategic framework that US must deal with in the future

Anti-globalists could move into a revolutionary mode, too
- So need to expect terror trouble from areas other than religious convictions

Al Qaeda’s main objection is to western dominance of its region
- Targets have become the NGOs and others needed to uphold the structure of Western dominance
- Not just targeting soldiers anymore in Afghanistan

Al Qaeda has successfully identified this sore spot in the Western organization
- NGOs can have their own exit strategies that do not need to be debated publicly
- Very sophisticated analysis by Al Qaeda to reach this understanding of Western structures

Globalization is considered the latest current manifestation of imperialism
- Language is different but some concepts are parallel

Al Qaeda is too narrow a concept to be considered a movement
- It is not a movement, just a name
- It is not controlled by anyone – anyone can be part of it
- Anyone can say they are involved especially if they go out and kill someone
  - Terrorism is the cheapest form of warfare
  - There is no end to the number of suicide bombers available

Coker disagrees with the QDR in its geographic look at the terrorism problem
- The virtual caliphate is in imaginations only
  - Not a geographical entity
  - Very difficult to deal with
- We are now in a *de-spatialized* world
- Opinion polls in the Mid East showed recently that
  - 90% thought the war on terror was a war on Islam
  - 4% thought anything at all about the Great Caliphate

Must face the reality of globalization
- Capitalism is culturally related – some do it better than others
  - According to Greenspan
- Tribalism has been aided by globalization
  - Prosperous young Muslims can now go on the Hajj every year
    - Have their faith renewed again and again
  - More splinter groups likely to develop each with its own personal grievances
- Historically, terrorism burns itself out
  - Bader Meinhoff Gang in Germany gave up
    - Recognized it was wrong when wall came down
  - Others became politicians as in Northern Ireland
- With the current set of grievances such burn out is less likely to occur
Al Qaeda is an iconic group, a virtual group
- There are not a specific number of people involved
- More like a venture capitalist movement
  - Expect that 8 of 10 supported ventures will fail
  - Only need one or two to work to keep the movement going
- Will allow them to make more changes to the concepts behind the organization

In the Post 9/11 World
- There was an old style of national security that threatened states
  - The Long War does not really threaten state security
  - Now need to worry about Homeland Security
- There have been 115 new courses on disaster preparedness in US universities
- People are being encouraged to police themselves and those around them
  - “Look for unusual packages / behavior / etc.”
- We have not figured out the values yet.
  - The problems with traveling will slow down business
    - When does it get to be too much and cost too much in profits?
    - Is the Patriot Act going too far?
    - Would it be better if we had more information about everyone?
- The state now admits that it cannot protect every citizen all the time
  - But the need for protection puts the state back at center stage
- Reductions to the authority of the state are clashing with the concept that more is expected of the state
  - Over the last few years business relied less on the police and more on private security guards

We must face the current crisis in a way where we can apply criterion
- Who are we fighting? They are not in uniform.
- What rights should we give these fighters?
- Need to look at the question related to the Geneva Conventions that use to work
  - Do they apply just to our own fighters, not the other side?
  - Should they apply to everyone as a way to win hearts and minds?

Must do things to maintain the ethical high ground
- US sold its ethical codes to the world as universal
- So must now keep them up despite problems

However, today’s enemies are a completely different kind – harder to deal with
- Also must face revenge as a principle as happens in Israel
  - Bull-dozing of suicide bombers homes / targeted assassinations
- This is very different than in wars of the past

Another alternative is to keep the principles that worked in the past but don’t allow them to apply to some individuals (unlawful combatants)
• So US would not put POWs in Guantanamo
• But a problem: How do you repatriate prisoners in the Long War?
• Must make up all these new rules as we go along

The US can afford to fight the Long War
• US could have been a superpower in 1914 if it chose to be
• Then might not have had WWI and its follow on problems
• Rates of US expenses on the military have really not changed over time
• What is being built now is really for the next war against China
• US may have funds but may not have adequate will for the Long War
• It will be hard to keep young people engaged in the Long War
• Hard to sit around waiting to be needed
• High-intensity warfare is more desirable – will there be enough?

Clausewitz says that you win when the enemy is persuaded to give up
• Maybe after 40 years the jihadists will see that they are not winning
  o Will be hard to bring their next generation into the war if no visible progress
• Jihadists may have to give up or become politicians

How do you maintain the political will to continue to support the Long War?
• Political leadership should do this
• Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between leading a crowd or being chased by one
• Tony Blair has taken a moral conviction stance that is unpopular
• Language needs to resonate – but not be just slogans